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# Center for Emergency Response and Terrorism (CERT)

**T**he Department of Health and Senior Services' (DHSS) Center for Emergency Response and Terrorism is responsible for coordinating regional and state planning for public health emergencies and disasters, including biological, chemical and nuclear terrorism. Through partnerships with hospitals and other health care organizations, local entities including government and law enforcement agencies, and other partners, the Center works to assure systems are in place to protect the health of Missourians during a public health emergency.

## Department Situation Room (DSR)

The Missouri Department Situation Room serves as the coordination point for all Department of Health and Senior Services' responses to emergencies, both natural and deliberate. It is operational at a non-threat level 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can be staffed and function as a command and control center in the event of an emergency. The DSR monitors the day-to-day emergency preparedness of the public health system and allied systems.

The DSR also serves as part of the Health Alert Network to rapidly receive and disperse communications among public health and healthcare partners at the local, regional, state



Department Situation Room (DSR)  
1-800-392-0272  
(for emergencies and disease reporting)  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

and federal levels, and assign and track follow-up activities. The DSR hotline is the contact point for the general public and public health partners.

## Public Health Preparedness and Response

Missouri is taking steps at the state and local level to increase our preparedness for and response to bioterrorism, outbreaks of infectious disease, and public health threats and emergencies. These efforts focus on:

- Assessment and planning
- Education and training
- Disease reporting (High Alert Surveillance System)
- Hospital and laboratory surveillance system
- Laboratory capacity
- Communications technology
- Public information and media relations
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

## Local Emergency Preparedness

Local public health agencies and regional response planners are working to develop integrated emergency regional response/terrorism plans that will coordinate with the state's emergency response plan. Epidemiology specialists, who will work to identify a bioterrorism event at the earliest possible point and work to contain it, are employed throughout the state.

## Hospital Preparedness

DHSS and the Missouri Hospital Association are working closely with hospitals to assess their needs and complete preparedness planning on the regional level. The assessments help determine equipment and planning needs so hospitals are better prepared in the event of a terrorist attack.

## Hospital Alert System

The Center is part of a hospital tracking system that allows health officials to know immediately which hospital emergency departments are on ambulance diversion or have no beds available. The EMSsystem links hospitals, major metropolitan emergency services providers, local public health agencies and DHSS.

This web-based communications system is important in detecting possible outbreaks by monitoring the number of admissions at hospitals. The system provides a linkage for all hospitals to obtain instant messages and alerts from the Department Situation Room and other authorities during disaster situations.

## Strategic National Stockpile

The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) program is an integral part of terrorism planning. The SNS push package is a supply of medications, antidotes, other medical supplies, and equipment necessary to counter the effects of nerve agents, biological pathogens, and chemical agents.

The Center will coordinate with state and local partners to disseminate these supplies should an emergency or terrorism event occur.

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### Smallpox Vaccinations

The Center coordinated the vaccinations of the healthcare smallpox response teams as part of CDC's Stage One pre-event smallpox initiative. Subsequent vaccinations are managed through the DHSS Division of Environmental Health and Communicable Disease Prevention. These efforts will better prepare the nation to respond to a biological smallpox attack.

### Additional Resources

The DHSS web site provides general information for the public, clinical information for health care professionals and links to the most recent medical guidelines related to bioterrorism. Information on potential biological, chemical and nuclear terrorism agents and diseases is also available.

[www.dhss.state.mo.us](http://www.dhss.state.mo.us)

### Other web sites:

[www.bt.cdc.gov](http://www.bt.cdc.gov)  
[www.homelandsecurity.state.mo.us](http://www.homelandsecurity.state.mo.us)  
[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)  
[www.whitehouse.gov/homeland](http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland)

### What can you do?

Don't Be Afraid, Be Ready—one individual, one family, one community at a time. The threat of terrorism forces us to make a choice. We can be afraid, or we can be ready.

- Make a kit of emergency supplies.
- Make a plan for what you will do in an emergency.
- Be informed about what might happen.

For more information, go to [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

—U.S. Department of Homeland Security

### Mission

The Center for Emergency Response and Terrorism will protect the community's health and the well-being of individuals of all ages by assuring the early detection and the rapid, coordinated response to all public health emergencies, both natural and deliberate.



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and Senior Services  
Center for Emergency Response and Terrorism  
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573-526-4768

1-800-392-0272

(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

[www.dhss.state.mo.us](http://www.dhss.state.mo.us)

Alternate forms of this publication for persons with disabilities may be obtained by contacting the office listed above.

Hearing impaired citizens telephone 1-800-735-2966.

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**Missouri Department of Health  
and Senior Services**